Routine Access Policy

1. Policy Statement

This Routine Access policy for the Office of the Premier and the Executive Council Office (the "Offices") is designed to provide persons with an opportunity to obtain certain categories of records without having to submit a *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPOP Act) application. This policy shall be administered in accordance with the following principles:

A) PERSONAL PRIVACY

Records containing the personal information of third parties as defined in the *FOIPOP Act* will not be disclosed by the Offices outside the *FOIPOP Act*, unless the personal information has been severed.

B) TIMELINESS

The Offices will respond to any Routine Access requests in a reasonable and timely fashion.

C) COST RECOVERY

Fees for the reproduction and provision of records may be charged where authorized by policies, regulations, or statutes.

D)TRANSPARENCY

This policy shall be made available to the public through the Executive Council Office web-site.

E) REASONABLENESS

The policy shall apply only to requests for reasonable quantities of records.

2. Definitions

ROUTINE ACCESS

Routine access is the routine or automatic release, in full or in part, of certain types of administrative or operational records as a matter of course in response to a request without the need for a formal application for records under the *FOIPOP Act*.

ACTIVE DISSEMINATION

Active dissemination is the periodic and proactive release of information or records in the absence of a request using mechanisms such as the Internet, libraries, etc.

FOIPOP ACCESS
FOIPOP access is the release of a record in response to a formal *FOIPOP Act* application made under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.*

RECORD
A record includes books, documents, maps, drawings, photographs, letters, vouchers, papers and any other thing on which information is recorded or stored by graphic, electronic, mechanical or other means, but does not include a computer program or any other mechanism that produces records.(clause 3(1) (k) *FOIPOP Act)*

3. Policy Objectives

The objective of this policy is the accessibility of certain records routinely without additional administrative time being required of staff to fulfill "Routine Access" requests. It is also to providea greater certainty of access for those requesting information, and reflect the spirit of openness and accountability of the FOIPOP Legislation.

4. Application

This policy applies to all staff and to all records designated under this policy. This policy shall apply only to requests for reasonable quantities of records; please note the specific limitations set out in the list below. Repetitive requests by a person for significant volumes of records, or the separation of a request into several small requests totaling a large volume, shall not be subject to the policy. Personal information may be severed in the same manner as under the *FOIPOP Act.* The records listed below are routinely accessible.

1. Employment contracts, subject to any personal privacy issues not related to functions, positions, or remuneration (e.g., address, phone number, pension instructions) (Limitation: applies to current employees only and is limited to a maximum of seven contracts.)
2. Secondment agreements both within and outside government, excluding personal information
3. Information on salaries/benefits received by non-contract staff, subject to any personal privacy issues not related to functions, positions, or remuneration (e.g. address, phone number, pension instructions) (Limitation: applies to current employees only and is limited to a maximum of seven staff.)

4. Current individual expense claims for specifically identified individuals not including invoices or individual credit card bills (limited to three current staff persons over a period of three months.)
5. Contracts under the N.S. Government Public Tenders Policy, unless confidentiality of certain business or personal information is requested by the contracting party, and subject to applicable FOIPOP discretionary exemptions, such as financial harm to the province, which may apply in specific situations.
6. Final program audits by N.S. Government Corporate Internal Audit Unit
7. Overtime expenditures (current year-to-date) for specific departments or divisions

5. Policy Directives

The following policy directives are effective October 23, 2003:

ROUTINE ACCESS POLICY WILL BE AVAILABLE TO PUBLIC

A. This policy will be posted on the Executive Council web-site, and will also be available on request from the Offices.

B. All staff of the Offices will be advised on this policy and will be provided with a copy of the policy.

RECORD RETENTION AND STORAGE

C. The records designated under this policy as routinely accessible shall be retained in the Offices for a minimum two year period, and organized in a manner which facilitates the timely response to routine access requests.

D. The records designated under this policy as routinely accessible may be transferred to a government records storage facility as per the government's records retention policies after the two year period has elapsed.

WHEN A REQUEST IS RECEIVED

E. When staff receive a request for records referred to in this policy, they shall inform the FOIPOP Administrator, who shall be responsible for processing the request in a timely manner.

F. The FOIPOP Administrator is responsible for keeping accurate and complete records of all routine access requests. The record keeping procedures established by the provincial FOIPOP Coordinator shall be followed.

6. Accountability

The Deputy Minister shall be accountable for the implementation of this policy.

7. Compliance

The FOIPOP Administator shall be responsible for ensuring the compliance with this policy.

8. Evaluation

The "Routine Access" Program established under this policy shall be evaluated on an annual basis by the FOIPOP Administrator.

9. Inquiries

David Nurse, FOIPOP Administrator
Executive Council Office
One Government Place
P.O. Box 2125
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3B7
Phone: 902-424-7850
Fax: 902-424-0667